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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 25 February 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write in immediate follow-up to our letter of 22 February and preceding letters in which we conveyed our grave concerns regarding the critical situation of Palestinian prisoners and detainees held captive in Israeli jails, including those Palestinians enduring long-term hunger strikes in protest at their administrative detention and other violations of their human rights. We have repeatedly drawn the international community's attention to the plight of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including the fact of their constant subjugation to physical and psychological abuse and torture by Israel, the occupying Power. Regrettably, our calls to the international community to shoulder its responsibilities with regard to this serious situation have been to no avail, allowing the occupying Power to persist with its arbitrary imprisonment and inhumane treatment of Palestinian civilians, including children, with total impunity.

In this regard, we regret to inform you of the death of a Palestinian prisoner, Arafat Jaradat, aged 30, on 23 February, while in the custody of Israel, the occupying Power, following his arrest last week and forced interrogations by Israeli prison authorities at the "Megiddo" jail. Israeli officials claim that Jaradat had been suffering from injuries after being hit by a rubber bullet and a tear gas canister during protests that had taken place on the day of his arrest (18 February) and claim that he died of a heart attack. However, these claims are being disputed, given that an autopsy that was conducted, with the participation of Palestinian and Israeli experts, of Jaradat's body revealed that he had been subjected to severe beatings, abuse and medical negligence during his captivity, possibly amounting to torture, resulting in at least six broken bones in his neck, spine, arms and legs, in addition to other injuries. Moreover, a lawyer who had last seen Jaradat alive during a hearing held on Thursday, 21 February, said that Jaradat had looked frail and sick as he sat in the courtroom and had told the lawyer that he was suffering great pain owing to

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beatings and being hanged for many long hours while being interrogated and that he feared the continuation of such violent interrogation.

This horrific incident is further proof of the inhumane treatment systematically meted out by Israel to Palestinians in its jails and detention centres over the decades of this nearly 46-year military occupation and the sheer disregard for Palestinian life pervasive among the Israeli occupying forces. We call for an impartial international investigation into his death. The international community, including the Security Council, must act to pressure Israel, the occupying Power, to fully abide by international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in all its actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including with regard to its imprisonment and detention of Palestinian civilians and their treatment while in Israeli captivity. Furthermore, we underscore the high priority accorded to and grave concerns of Palestinian society and the Palestinian leadership for the prisoner issue and reiterate our calls for justice and the upholding of human rights for all Palestinian prisoners, including our demands for international monitoring of their conditions, including hunger strikers, among them Samer Issawi, Ayman Sharawna, Jaafar Ezzedine and Tareq Qedan, and our calls for the release of all Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

In this regard, it is clear that the tragic death of Jaradat, a father of two young children under the age of 3, has further stoked already high sensitivities, tensions and anger among the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Protests continue to be held in Palestinian cities, towns and villages in protest at Jaradat's killing, as well as in continuing solidarity with long-term hunger-striking prisoners and all Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, the occupying Power.

On Sunday, 24 February, more than 4,500 Palestinians in Israeli jails launched a hunger strike in protest at Arafat Jaradat's death. Moreover, hundreds upon hundreds of Palestinians have been holding demonstrations throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip following his death, particularly in the area of Al-Khalil near Jaradat's village of Sair, where he was buried today, and in Beit Ummar and Al-Arroub refugee camp. The Israeli occupying forces continue to use excessive force against these non-violent protests and demonstrations, injuring dozens of Palestinians, including two who were injured by live fire on Sunday, including a 13-year-old boy.

We thus once again appeal to the international community to give immediate attention to the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of Israel's ongoing violations and crimes against the Palestinian people, including against Palestinian prisoners. The persistence of these violations is severely raising tensions and threatens to further destabilize the already fragile situation on the ground with far-reaching consequences. International law and relevant United Nations resolutions must be upheld and Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable for its violations. The human rights of the Palestinian people must be ensured and respected, even while living under foreign occupation. All this is imperative for calm to be preserved and for the prospects that remain for peace to be salvaged.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 455 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September

2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 22 February 2013 (A/ES-10/582-S/2013/109) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda **Abdelhady-Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.